

# **BC PROBUS Club Management Conference**

**April 28, 2018**

**Point Grey Golf and Country Club  
3350 SW Marine Drive, Vancouver BC**

## **Report on Proceedings**

### **Welcome and Introduction to PROBUS Canada**

Bill Sexsmith, President, PROBUS Canada, welcomed delegates from 24 BC clubs and introduced the conference as an opportunity for them to exchange experiences and get ideas for use at their own clubs. The conference program included.

PROBUS Canada 2017-2018 Programs and Progress – Presentation and discussion

Morning breakout sessions - All delegates discussed the same topic: “Succession, Continuity, Transition and Tenure.” In four groups.

Afternoon Breakout Sessions - Delegates selected and discussed one of four topics

1. Expectations from PROBUS Canada
2. Recruitment Requirements and Effective Programs
3. New Club Development (Identification of new sites and implementation)
4. Electronic Payment Systems (for Activities and Dues)

Conclusion

### **PROBUS Canada 2017-2018 Programs and Progress**

Bill gave a presentation on “Sustainability and Renewal.” In 2017, PROBUS had 242 clubs in Canada with 36,500 members. In BC there were 45 clubs with 7,052 members. Membership growth had been declining, but as a result of programs to promote membership and create new clubs, PROBUS is achieving a sustainable growth rate. There is a need for 5 – 7 new clubs per year and clubs with long waiting lists are encouraged to help sponsor new clubs. PROBUS has found that a large membership can make it difficult for members to get to know each other and recommends clubs establish a maximum of 250 members.

## **Morning Breakout Sessions**

### **Succession, Continuity, Transition and Tenure**

All delegates discussed the same topic in four groups.

As volunteer organizations, how do we make sure that we can sustainably meet the expectations of our members for speakers, social opportunities, tours and visits, and other activities? To do so requires:

- Individuals and committees that can reliably deliver services—coordinated by the President and Management Committee.
- A way to ensure continuity so that important services are not interrupted, and that volunteers don't burn out or overstay their welcome.

#### **Identify and recruit volunteers**

- Identify new members' interests, skills and past experiences
- Host wine and cheese events to welcome new members and remind existing members of the exciting possibilities of volunteering
- Recognize that some people want to be involved from the beginning, but others want to explore the possibilities first
- Encourage sponsor involvement in mentoring new members
- When annual dues invoices are sent out, confirm contact information, ask which committees they would like to join, and ask for suggested speakers and activities.
- Have a Management Committee as a greeter at meetings. This could be a member at large.
- Schedule lunch or other activity immediately after monthly meetings
- Advertise volunteer opportunities (Press release)
- Talk up volunteer positions to friends and follow up with new members
- Establish a committee to approach people
- Form a Nominations Committee
- Develop a welcoming committee
- Welcome new members – put red sticker on badge

#### **Job Descriptions**

- Prepare written job descriptions for Management Committee members and volunteers
- Put Management Committee job descriptions on the website
- Introduce a President's Manual to assist future Presidents

#### **Management Committee**

- Consider keeping Management Committee as small as possible—all members have a working role. 10 - 12 members.
- Define activities and break down into smaller groups
- Rotate men and women in executive positions
- No spouses serving together on Management Committee
- Include members at large, on the understanding that they will assume responsibility in future years

#### **Tenure limits**

- Tenure in any one Management Committee position should be a maximum of 2 or 3 years, to guard against becoming too dependent on incumbents

- 2 year limit on President position
- Members of Management Committee asked to “step up or move out”.
- Set limit on other committee positions

### **Continuity and backup**

- Individual committees should stagger changes of chairpersons to maintain continuity on the Management Committee
- Ensure there are backup members for all Management Committee positions
- Double up on duties of Snowbirds and travellers
- Mentor program
- Have Management Committee members find their own successors
- Share committees with two members
- Every position has a deputy—understanding that deputy will assume position
- Develop calendar of recurring events (AGM, dues renewals, PROBUS Month, etc)
- Organize speakers for first two months of new Management Committee’s year (Sept and Oct). Give organizer some breathing space.
- Have backup/deputy/trainee position for Secretary and Treasurer

### **Executive Ladder**

- Move people up through the Management Committee to VP and President
- VP should be prepared to replace President
- VP should not have major committee responsibility, but be available for special projects, strategic planning, bylaw review, etc.
- VP may be responsible for maintaining job descriptions

### **Special Interest Groups/Mini-Clubs**

- Encourage special interest groups (book clubs, bridge groups and dinner groups, etc.
- Develop guidelines for setting up groups and clubs

### **Other**

- Some people perceive that their lack of good computer skills are a challenge. Could a club pay for courses if needed? New members who are generally younger are more conversant with today’s technology
- Cancel membership if dues not paid by due date
- Should clubs that have achieved their membership cap be working on setting up new clubs?
- Hold think tanks to identify potential speakers and activities

## **Afternoon Breakout Sessions**

### **Expectations from PROBUS Canada**

The group identified a number of expectations from PROBUS Canada, primarily the need for clear communications about:

- The respective roles of PROBUS Canada and clubs
- Guidelines for clubs—which should not be rules
- Contacts at PROBUS Canada
- Insurance policies (see below)
- How to ensure timely and accurate information on the PROBUS Canada website (It was recognized that a new website is under development)
- How clubs can use the website to obtain and share information and ideas
- The Johnson MEDOC medical and travel insurance
- How the PROBUS Canada board is selected and its role—regional representation and/or designated portfolios
- How local club dues are used by PROBUS Canada—e.g. for insurance, administration, etc.
- Proposals by PROBUS Canada to introduce new programs and member benefits—after surveying clubs to determine their need and preferences
- Acknowledgement of new club presidents by promptly adding their names and contact information to the PROBUS Canada website, and be sending a note of welcome.

#### **Specific topics**

- PROBUS Canada provides liability insurance to clubs as part of membership and provides a certificate of insurance to each club. Some venues require a certificate of liability insurance that names them as insureds. Can clubs obtain customized certificates with the names of their venues include as insureds?
- PROBUS Canada also offers optional Directors and Officers insurance. Should all clubs have this?
- Does PROBUS Canada have adequate revenues to meet the needs and expectation of clubs? Consideration should be given to raising funds through sponsorships (possibly from organizations that offer member benefits.
- There was support for annual conferences similar to this one.

## **Recruitment Requirements and Effective Programs**

### **Attracting potential members**

- Brochure/rack card
- Website
- Articles in local paper
- Ongoing advertisement in local paper
- Word of mouth
- Visit seniors centres
- Advertisement in seniors' newsletters
- Put brochures in tourist office
- Advertisement on Coffee News (restaurant publication)
- Talk to realtors – learn of newcomers

- Find out who is retiring - Talk to unions, professional organizations, and employers who offer retirement counselling

### **Guest visits**

- Encourage members to bring guests
- Keep a guest register with contact info and follow up.
- Note: guests who attend activities (hikes, etc) should sign waivers

### **New Members**

- When members are new to the area and/or have not been sponsored, arrange for an interview by one of the executive.

### **Programs**

- Programs drive PROBUS Clubs
- Quality of speaker is important
- Develop lists of potential speakers and outings
- Local profile issues are popular
- Suggestions for speakers referred by members
- Visit other clubs

## **New Club Development (Identification of new sites and implementation)**

### **Locations for future PROBUS clubs in BC**

Burnaby, Mission, New Westminster, North Surrey, Richmond, Kelowna, Prince George.

### **Issues and comments**

- The format of the present PROBUS Canada guidelines for starting a club does not provide easy guidelines for taking action
- Clubs need reassurance that establishing a new club does not represent competition but rather the expansion of the PROBUS franchise to meet a growing demand and an opportunity to resolve long waiting lists
- Clubs need help setting up new clubs
- The minimum size of a viable club depends on the location and enthusiasm of its members and need not be a fixed number
- Public relations are needed to explain PROBUS to people. Perhaps there should be less emphasis on Professional and Business.

### **Questions**

- Is the connection with Rotary still a significant factor in forming new clubs?
- Is it appropriate to establish new single gender clubs? Could this be considered discriminatory? Does PROBUS Canada have role in this?
- What can and should be done about ethnic diversity?

## **Electronic Payment Systems (for Activities and Dues)**

Clubs are faced with the challenge of handling information and payments for dues and activities.

Three alternatives were discussed. PayPal seems most promising.

1. E-transfers (Interac)  
Fast, easy to use, trusted and inexpensive but may provide limited reporting on reasons for payment.
2. Square – an app and add-on card swiper for phones and pads.  
Fast, easy to use. Also accepts keyed in card numbers. Fee about 3%  
Apparently provides limited reporting on reasons for payment  
Use on members' private phones may be perceived as a security problem
3. PayPal – web-based payment system  
Secure, easy to use, trusted, offers e-mail invoicing, accepts debit and credit, provides good reporting on multiple payment types (dues, activity fees etc)  
Fee of 2.9% plus 30 cents per transaction.

Any new system will require support and training for volunteers who accept payments, and member who use it. People are however, increasingly computer literate and expect to be able to pay electronically.

## **Conclusion**

Bill thanked the delegates for attending, and the members of the Planning Committee for their contributions to the success of the conference: Peter Cook, Jane LePorte, Hugh Lindsay, 'Marelyn Rugg, Tony Weall and John Zaplatynsky.

The conference ended just before 3:00 pm.

Hugh Lindsay

Recording Secretary